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CLAIMS

1. A method for storing data that has at least some entries with multiple value attributes, comprising the steps of:

profiling the data to determine whether the data should be in stored in an attribute table or, alternatively, in a merged table and an overflow table; and

storing the data optimally based on the profiling step.

- 2. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the entries with single value attributes are stored in the merged table.
- 3. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the entries with multiple value attributes are stored in the overflow table.
 - 4. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the overflow table is an attribute table.

5. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein a majority of the data is stored in the merged table and a small set of additional values for the multiple value attributes are stored in the overflow table.

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- 6. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the profiling step parses the data to identify entries with single value attributes.
- 7. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the profiling step parses the data to identify given operations that are performed on the data once stored.
- 8. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the 10 data is stored in a relational database backing store.

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9. A method for storing data that has at least some entries with multiple value attributes, comprising the steps of:

profiling the data to determine whether the data should be stored in per attribute tables or in a merged table and an overflow table;

storing the information optimally according to the profiling step; and

keeping pointers for future operations on the data in the merged and overflow tables.

- 10. The method as described in Claim 9 wherein a majority of the data is stored in the merged table and a small set of additional values for the multiple value attributes are stored in the overflow table.
- 11. The method as described in Claim 9 wherein the profiling step is performed as a function of a number of data entries having multiple value attributes.

12. The method as described in Claim 9 wherein the profiling step is performed by identifying operations that will be performed on the data once stored.

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13. The method as described in Claim 9 wherein the data is stored in a relational database backing store.

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14. The method as described in Claim 9 wherein the 5 merged table and the overflow table are stored in the relational database backing store.

- 15. A database schema for a directory service having a backing store, comprising:
- a first table for storing data for entries having single value attributes; and
- a second table for storing data for entries having multiple value attributes;

wherein a majority of the entries have single value attributes and a small set of the entries have multiple value attributes.

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- 16. The database schema as described in Claim 15 wherein the second table is a per attribute table.
- 17. The database schema as described in Claim 15
 wherein the directory service is implemented according to a
 Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP).
 - 18. The database schema as described in Claim 17 wherein the backing store is a relational database.

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19. A directory service, comprising:

a directory organized as a naming hierarchy having a plurality of entries each represented by a unique identifier;

a relational database management system having a backing store for storing directory data;

a database schema, comprising:

a first table for storing data for entries having single value attributes; and

a second table for storing data for entries having multiple value attributes;

wherein a majority of the entries have single value attributes and a small set of the entries have multiple value attributes.

20. The directory service as described in Claim 19 wherein the directory is compliant with the Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP).

- 21. In a directory service having a directory organized as a naming hierarchy, the hierarchy including a plurality of entries each represented by a unique identifier, the improvement comprising:
- a relational database management system having a backing store for storing directory data according to a schema comprising;
 - a first table for storing data for entries having single value attributes; and
- a second table for storing data for entries having multiple value attributes;

wherein a majority of the entries have single value attributes and a small set of the entries have multiple value attributes.

22. In the directory service as described in Claim 21 wherein the directory is compliant with the Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP).

23. A method for storing data that has at least some entries with multiple value attributes, comprising the steps of:

storing data for entries having single value attributes

5 in a first table;

storing data for entries having multiple value attributes in a second table; and

wherein a majority of the entries have single value attributes and a small set of the entries have multiple value attributes.